re We, Then, Such Lousy Linguists?

By C. L. SULZBERGER PARIS, Feb. 7—President Ken-addy has made some oxceptionally tute appointments affecting our other affairs posture and he has

iso shown great wisdors is keeping i their posts outstanding officials from the previous Administration.

In the former category we find the trio heading the State Department; plus Mr. Labouisse in I. C. A., Mr. Dillon at the Treasury, Mr. Murrow in U. S. I. A., Mr. Stevenson at U. N. Mr. Nitze in Defense diplomacy, Mr. McCloy for disarmament, Mr. Dean for nuclear negotiations and Mr. Kennan as Ambassador to

In the latter category, we see Mr. Dulles retained for the monce him well assures me he doesn't at C. I. A., Mr. Bohlen for Soviet speak French and the Elysée Palace affairs, and Messrs. Thompson, Dowling and Reinhardt staying on as envoys in Moscow, Bonn and aren't true. While the U. S. A. prob-Cairo. These men have proved theil ably doesn't boast many intimates great competence and devotion.

Furthermore, the President dis. modicum, of French-speakers. plays admirable resolve to seek out Kennedy wouldn't be eligible for the best available talent even when any particular blame had he himhe must resurrect individuals who self not raised the subject during had been previously discouraged the campaign. None of our postfrom continuing public careers. Thus, war envoys here has been remarkhe not only prevailed upon Kennan able for knowledge of French. In to return; he has brought General Raly we fared a bit better, thanks Gavin back—If in another capacity to the long tenure of James Clement former retires.

This emphasis on harnessing capability has, however, been married ficulty in finding envoys able to face by one departure from the Presi- the world's Babel. We are the meltdent's previous intentions. Prior to ing pot par excellence, inhabited by his election he said frequently he people originating all over the yould insist that all our Ambassa earth. As the richest nation, we dors in vital posts should, where should give our citizens an educa-reasonably possible, speak the local tion including knowledge of foreign language. He shows signs of for-tongues. getting this pledge.

who cannot be called fluent in An passador to Washington from French, designated as representa- some other land—who can't speak tive in France. The exquisitely man- English well-finds himself embarneved General Biddle is slated for rassed and politically crippled. It is Spain, athough hardly expert it Spanish. And the two leading can simple fact—as applied to us. didates for Italy, Messrs. Roosevell Surely the New Frontier might pass as native Romans.

prove to be highly successful. But French, Italian and Spanish. It is there must be other Americans hard to be a Talleyrand through a among our 180,000,000 who have translator. perhaps equal competence plus linguistic ability. We certainly have career diplomats who speak French. Spanish and Italian as well as

The President has carried out his promise to see that nobody shall be disqualified by lack of funds from expensive posts hitherto available only to millionaires. Gavin is an example of this welcome change. It is therefore all the more a pity that Mr. Kennedy, who had also promised to give such weight to language considerations, is not doing so.

In France and Spain, crucial business must be done with de Gaulle or Franco, neither of whom speaks English. That means the awkward formula of interpreters. Anybody who has ever seen de Gaulle's face grow longer at the prospect-or Franco's patient look of boredomknows this system is unsatisfactory.

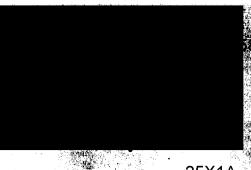
The French have much interest and sympathy in Gavin, among the first Americans to touch their soil in 1944. But a General who knows politely affirms that reports of his "friendship" with de Gaulle simply of de Gaulle, it surely can claim a

eventually he may well replace Dunn. In Spain we had one talented Dulles with General Taylor when the Hispanist; but his political judgment was, less commendable.

Our country should have little dif-

No matter how delightful, persua-Thus we find the brilliant Gavin, sive and profound he might be, the too bad we don't remember this

and Benton, could never aspire to better be explained to others without benefit of interpreters at least in These distinguished men may such relatively simple tongues as



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